1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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121
177 concession can be independently observed in Santal social rela-
186 tions with Hindus as well as inferred from Santal comments about the social superiority of the *diku*.

121
177 Such an emulative tendency, if put into practice, may at first
186 lead to gross copying. Without internalization of emulative
554 attitudes it is not likely to accomplish its objective and results in the kind of imitation epitomized by the *nouveau riche*. Such behavior appears gauche and thereby generates its own tendency toward internalization. Emulation may be directed toward attaining rank in interaction with social units belonging to the dominant society or within one's own society.

To concede that another society is more powerful is not tantamount to conceding it superior rank. Such a power concession generates its own borrowing tendencies, which might be termed "power incorporative borrowing," since it involves regarding the more powerful society's traits as possessing a special efficacy, which arises by projecting onto these traits the power of the dominant society. But while power concession does not imply rank concession, rank concession is almost always accompanied by and therefore implies power concession. Rank concession will therefore always be associated with both emulation and power incorporative borrowing. Emulation and power incorporation are often intermingled in particular acts and serve to maintain borrowed practices as well as to generate new borrowings. Power incorporation appears in its purest form in Santal curing practices, whose end is primarily curing efficacy or the belief in such efficacy, though the prestige which accrues to the practitioner who employs borrowed practices is
[755] not without significance. For example, one commonly hears Bengali and Oriya songs and Sanskritic prayers as essential elements in curing rites, though often even the practitioner

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121
177 does not understand the words. Such practices could hardly
186 have been borrowed because of a peculiar "fit" of their content
554 with traditional Santal patterns. Certainly such practices are not
• 755 naturalistically more efficacious. It is rather a case of connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as "*big* and *knowing* people."

121 There is a third reason for the tendency to adopt practices
177 of the dominant society, one which follows almost inevitably
186 from the condition of being encysted. This is the "external
648 pressure" brought to bear by the dominant society on the encysted society to adopt its customs. The basis for the near inevitability of this pressure is nothing less than the solidarity needs of the dominant society. Surrounding dominant societies must demand allegiance to at least the official symbols of suzerainty; acceptance of a number of other customs is likely also to be demanded as the solidarity needs of the dominant society increase. There are likely also to be a number of customs of the encysted society which the superior society finds repugnant, a reaction which invariably creates some pressure for "reform" of the encysted society. The pressures exerted on the encysted society may include positive rewards for compliance or coercive acts by police or even by an army.

648 Perhaps the oldest and most continuous of such pressures
782 on the Santal has been governmental interference with Santal cow sacrifice and beef eating. Armed interference has been practiced everywhere and has not ceased under present democratic conditions. Cow sacrifice has continued, but in secret so as to avoid prosecution and interruption of the rites. However, some villages, fearing arrest and harassment, have abandoned such sacrifice, particularly where there are Hindus in the village who might report this activity to the authorities. There is no

j. Concerning fever and illness.

757 When husband or wife or the children get fever, they let some one feel the hand (pulse). When he has done this, he says: He is all right; let some medicine be crushed for the ill one, he will get well. Then they say to him: Do, Sir, please you give him medicine. He will then go to the forest, dig up and bring medicine; when he has done this, he pounds it for the patient; the juice he squeezes out into a leaf-cup; he then makes him drink it. He does this for him some three or four days. If the patient does not get well by this, the medicine giver says: By this all people recover; how is it that this one is not recovering; let the reason for this be found out from some one.

• 755 Then they get hold of an ojha. He makes divination. The person who wants divination to be made goes to an ojha with oil and Sal-leaves, hands these over to him and says to him: Please, Father, look into these leaves and this oil of mine. The ojha asks him: Who of you is ill? He says: My wife, or my child (as the case may be). The ojha says: What is your name? He tells him this. The ojha then asks him about his village. Having got the name of the village he pours some oil out on one leaf; thereupon he sprinkles the oil on the leaf three times on the ground, naming his patron godling. He then presses a leaf down on the leaf with oil, covering it, and he rubs it, pronouncing an incantation. Thereupon he puts it for a short while down on the ground. Having taken it up from the ground he salutes it, and separating the leaves he looks at it. The person who has caused the divination to be made, asks the ojha: What do you see, Father, disease or a bonga or people? The ojha answers him: So and so bonga of yours is feeling hungry, and some spell of an evil eye is also there. Ojhas will not at once mention witches. If two or three ojhas, of different villages, say the same, then the person believes it and having reached home he pours out water as a libation to the bongs they have named, and says: May he (she) recover; when he (she) has recovered, I shall fill thee, give thee as much as thou canst take.

Thereupon he takes hold of the ojha of the village. He makes divination to catch the bongas of the outskirts. He then says: The evil-eye-bonga is so and so. The man who causes the divination to be made says: Please reconcile him. Now the ojha asks for a little sun-dried rice. He gets this in a leaf. The ojha then makes the patient touch this rice with his left hand, and he exorcises him (her) with the rice. Thereupon he goes to the end of the homestead field and prickles himself with a thorn in five places on his thigh; he smears the blood on the rice; thereupon he kneads and mixes the blood-smeared rice with the rice in the leaf. Thereupon he sows this out with his left hand to the bonga who has been caught. He now makes an invocation: Beware then, thou so and so, in so and so headman's house thou applied thyself, knocked thyself; to-day I caught thee, grasped thee with my hand like a fish, like a crab; from to-day mayest thou forswear,

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leave for ever this house; what is ill, what is diseased, may that recover, may it get well; what there is of pain, of suffering, mayest thou fasten, mayest thou make less; like water in a hollowed out hole in a river, in a spring pool, may he become pure, may he become well, Lord, Father my Ṭhakur. 755

Thereupon he spreads out (rice) for the bongas of the places along the boundary. He then says to these: Here, O Lords, ye are here in these parts, in stumps and in roots, in water, anywhere, in recesses, in holes, ye who are moving, come near, and ye who do not move, be witnesses from a distance, favour it.

Thereupon he brings roots and crushes them for the patient. If the patient recovers by this, well and good; if not, the ojha says: I am unable to manage it; apply to the village headman and his deputy; somebody, who knows who, are instigating and entering into this.

k. Concerning relatives.

Among the relatives, excepting those of both parents (i. e., of husband and wife), they like those on the wife's side best. For the maternal uncles and their family and for the brothers of the wife husband and wife have much thought. They mostly visit these. When they are visited, they kill a good many fowls and pigs, and they give them much beer and food. And the two themselves also show them much hospitality. They also love and show hospitality to the brothers of the husband or the maternal uncles on the husband's side and their families, but not to such a degree. There is a folk tale: Once, who knows when, they tell, the maternal and paternal uncles of a child had come on a visit and met at the couple's house. When they had had their noon meal, it commenced to threaten to rain. At this time the woman took the child on her hip and fondled it in the court-yard; then she said: In the direction of the home of your maternal uncles, my child, heavy heavy clouds have arisen, it is black there; in the direction of the home of your paternal uncles there is a clear sky. Then the brothers of her husband came out and looked about; there were the same kind of clouds everywhere; consequently it dawned upon them: the wife wants to send us away, so that she may entertain her brothers. Thereupon, pleading something or other as an excuse, they quietly took themselves off; what could they otherwise do? Then her brothers were also on the point of going. But then she says to them: Don't, my elder brothers, go away, there is a pot of weak, weak beer, stay to-day. When it became evening, she poured out beer, and she made her husband kill a pig. She gave them any amount of meat, rice, and beer; they ate and drank abundantly. 602 [539]

The women do not turn their back to the relatives on their husband's side; they keep water for the children (i. e., arrange for their support), in order that when their father is no more, they may teach them to worship the spirits; but they have not much love for them, it is only for the sake of profit.

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539 754 have never come here, as you know. Hearing this Marañ buru became dumbfounded and said to them: I have given it to you, what else have I done. Look here, look at your own marks! Seeing their different marks the men said: The marks are ours; but we have never made the marks; somebody, who knows who, have made our marks.

Then Marañ buru put his hand to his cheek and was thinking it over in his mind; then it suddenly dawned upon him: The women have made a mere child even of me. And becoming angry he said to the men: Do make marks here at once, we shall see these deceitful women. They made their marks, and he initiated them as ojhas and witchfinders, in order that they might be able to find out the witches and punish them. From that time the witches and the ojhas and witchfinders are enemies. But the ojhas and the witchfinders are unable to do anything, because the witches easily subdue their bongas, so that they are unable to catch them quickly; other people emerge in the divination, and being hoodwinked the witchfinders name other people.

Some people say that the witches, ojhas, and witchfinders have all learnt from Kamru guru. It is reported that very long ago our ancestors were disciples with him. With regard to becoming ojhas that is quite so, because ojhas mention him first; but as regards witches and witchfinders, I don't know whether they have learnt from Kamru guru or not; so far as invoking is concerned, they do not invoke him; therefore my opinion is, that they have not learnt from him.

b. The ojhas.

756 To become ojhas[3] we have really learnt from Kamru guru[4]. Very long ago his country and our country were near to each other; our ancestors have told us this. The work of the ojhas is of six kinds: 1) they make divination; 2) they sow rice; 3) they bite people or rub them with a ball of rice flour; 4) they dig up bongas; 5) they exorcize bongas; and 6) they give medicine to people. If ill people do not recover by the medicine, the 755 village people get an ojha to make divination. They bring oil and Sal-leaves to him, and, sitting down, he smears oil on two leaves, and with an incantation he rubs the leaves: Oil oil, mustard oil, man mustard oil, baru oil, Mahua oil, castor oil, bherṇḍa oil, rae rui mustard oil, this oil, reading, what will appear, a witch may appear, an imp may appear, a female demon may appear, poison may appear, who reads, the guru reads, the guru's knowledge, mae (the mother) reads, do read by Kahri's knowledge, by Kamru's grace, grace he reads[5].

Having done this he puts it down on the ground for a little while. Thereupon taking off one leaf he looks at it, and they ask him: Do make an offering first; what have you found? Only when you tell us, we shall understand. Now the ojha has, before making

[3] Cf. the writer's Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore, Asiatic Society of Bengal's Memoirs, Vol. X. [4] See Dictionary s.v. Kambru. [5] This formula has been dealt with in Santal Medicine.

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the divination, selected what the different spots are to stand for, viz., here is a witch, here is the house bonga, here is a bonga of the outskirts, here is a disease, and here is poison. In what place on the leaf it comes up, in small bubbles, he tells them; if a witch then a witch, if a bonga then a bonga, if disease then disease, and if poison then poison. If witches are shown, the village headman and his deputy together with the village council will in the evening call out at every house: Beware you so and so, so and so is ill, may he get well; we have caught you; if he does not get well, we shall certainly not call you good. If the patient gets well by this, well and good; otherwise the village headman sends men in pairs to the neighbourhood to have divination in oil made. In the evening they come together, and they ask the men who went to get divination in oil made, each one separately. If they have brought the answer from three persons, that it is a witch, they fix branches in the ground to single out the person, and if their reports do not agree, they have again fresh divinations made.

If the house bonga is shown up, they say to the patient: Do appease your bonga. He then libates water to him and makes a vow, saying: When I get well, I shall fill thee. If a bonga of the outskirts is shown up, the ojha scatters rice out for the bonga, making this invocation: Here then, thou so and so bonga, my own blood, pricked-out blood I am giving thee, handing to thee; may he get well, may he recover; whoever hired thee, invited thee, her (his) principal son mayest thou provide with food, with provisions for the journey; from to-day mayest thou forswear, for ever leave this house; where thy place, thy residence may be, go there, get up with thee. Scattering out rice also to Marañ buru and Pargana he makes invocations to them: Beware then, as is seen here, in such and such headman's house an eating bonga, an eating mountain spirit had applied himself, had struck against (a person); I caught him, I grasped him, his broken grain, his rice grain I gave; please be witness to it, be favourably present at it; from to-day may the ill person get well, may he recover. In this way the ojha makes invocations separately to Marañ buru and Pargana. Finally he makes invocations to the bongas of roots and stumps and those near the boundary, scattering out rice to them: Beware then, ye also, of the roots, of the stumps, of the recesses, of the holes, of the boundary, of the side, splendid ones, spirited ones, carrying the water-bottles, carrying on your backs the sandals, ascetics, friends, managing ones, come near, and ye that cannot come, be witnesses, be eye-witnesses from far away.

If disease is shown up, they will crush medicines for the patient and let him drink these; and if it is poison, they will bite the patient or rub him with a cotton ball. First, pronouncing an incantation, they exorcise and bring it together in one place; thereupon they bite it out and spit it out into a leaf-cup, that is to say, the ojha does this. Or where the disease is situated, there they rub with a ball of flour, pronouncing an incantation. When the patient gets well, they give the ojha fowls for offering to his bonga. When he has sacrificed them, he eats them, and he gives a share to a couple of the village people.

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c. Planting branches.

755 787 Branch planting is done as follows: If witches or bongas or disease is shown by the divination, they plant branches at the water's edge to prove this. To stand as a witness they first plant a branch in the middle; thereafter one in the name of the house-bonga; thereupon one in the name of the bonga of the house-wife's old home, thereupon one in the name of the man's brother and male relatives; thereupon one in the name of the daughters and the sisters; thereupon one in the name of an epidemic, and after this they plant one branch in the name of each separate house in the village. They apply sindur to every branch as it is planted. Thereupon they scatter out rice and make invocation: Be greeted then, Sin bonga in heaven! Thou art spread out like a mat, the four corners, the four worlds thou hast covered; here then we are trying to find, to trace by ordeal; what is guilty thou wilt show guilty, may that dry up, may it wither — thou wilt call witnesses, — and if it is not so, mayest thou sprout like a sedge sprout; thou wilt remain unchanged (that is the witness branch).

Again they speak: Have a care then, if thou art a bonga, may this dry up, may it wither; if it is not thou, may it remain unchanged. Thou wilt call witnesses. In the same way they make invocations in the name of all at each branch. When they have acted in this way, they go home. Some five hours afterwards they return to have a look at the branches. Which branch, standing in anybody's name, has died, they find out for certain. If it has been proved to stand for witches, then in so many houses as the branches have whithered there there are witches. Afterwards they seek fresh proofs in other villages in the same way, in two or three places. Thereupon they say to the suffering person: We have ascertained these things for you; are you taking us to the guru, or is it well as it is? He will say in reply: I am not getting well; we must bring a clear decision from the guru. They fix a day and go to the witchfinder.

d. The witchfinders.

754 The witchfinders are our High-court in connexion with witchcraft. Whom they pronounce to be witches, these we call true witches. Whether they really find them, or it is false, so far as we are concerned, we believe that they really find them; they have namely received initiation from Marah guru. And we also test them, whether they speak inspired by the bongas, or they deceitfully act as witchfinders.

If a person does not become well by medicine, we first let divination be made by an ojha; thereupon we plant branches in the villages; then only we go to the witchfinder. If the whole village is ill, the village headman invites all men and takes us along; and if only one person is ill, he cries to the village headman; then a couple of men on the side of the patient, and the husband or the brothers of the person who has been found

178 787 be possessed as Mañjhi haṛam. Thereupon I quickly become possessed, and they ask me: Who are you, Lord? Then I tell: Mañjhi haṛam. Then they take me to their house; at the door they wash my feet on a brass plate. Thereupon they take me inside and make me sit down on a stool. Then they bring me some very tasty poured out beer in a brass-cup. When I have drunk about two brass-cups, I come to. In many villages I have fraudulently obtained beer by becoming possessed in this way.

When they tie the bullocks to the posts in the street at the Sohrae and forget any customary act, I look intently at it, in order that when they ask me, after my having become possessed, I may be able to tell exactly why I, the Mañjhi haṛam, have come. Having become possessed I say to them: I have come because you have done wrong in connexion with this or that. Then they say to me: Well, my Lord, don't be offended; we did something wrong; please put up with it, endure it. Then they again give me one additional brass-cup full of beer.

f. Application of the (evil) eye.

754 Application of the eye is also a trouble that we have. The eye of women is applied because of envy. When they see that someone has earned well, they say: Nothing happens to so and so; they are earning exceedingly; they will surely have no trouble. This speech of theirs takes effect. Then these people become ill; their cattle die, and they get much suffering. When they let divination be made in connexion with this the ojhas say: Envy and malevolence have been applied to you. Consequently they give fowls to the ojha, that he may make them well by sacrificing them. Therefore, however wise we Santals may be, or however much we may be able to work, we do not exert ourselves too much; we rather suffer hunger.

• 755

g. Of being bewitched.

754 We are also afraid of being bewitched. People say, it is told, if people whose tongue is spotted look at you when you are eating, you will vomit a good deal, afterwards you will get diarrhoea, and in case it is a child, they will also cry much. On such occasions we let persons who know how to do it, feel the pulse. They will then say: This one has been bewitched, get me some marking nut, one half of the pod of the fruit of jom lar[9], some charcoal and a straw of a worn broom. They bring him this, and keeping his breath he three times makes exorcizing passes over the bewitched person, and when he is performing this, he takes these things below and under his legs; thereupon he throws it all away on to the homestead field of some other person.

[9] Semlata Vahili, W. & A.

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h. About digging out bongas.

To dig out bongas is also a work we have. We make the ojhas dig, if it has been proved that a bonga has been buried. Witches deposit (bury) bongas in the house or cowshed of some person, in order that these people may die. On such occasions we fetch an ojha, that is to say one who knows how to dig out bongas. Not all ojhas know this. The ojhas first make divination, to find out where the buried bongas are. When they have ascertained this, they dig out the bongas. We have seen bongas that have been dug out. Deposited bongas are of two kinds. One kind of bonga is a white stone to which sindur has been applied, covered by hair wrapped round it, and another kind of bonga is all kinds of agricultural seeds and a white stone with sindur applied to it, put into an empty cocoon. When the bonga has been dug out, the diseased persons sometimes get well, sometimes they also get worse thereby. When they dig out bongas, sacrifices have to be given, one ram, one pig, one goat, five fowls and one pair of pigeons. The ojha gets for the offering of his blood five four-anna bits in money, and when the diseased person gets quite well, the ojha at the same time next year gets five rupees and a loin-cloth. 754 755

i. The bonga of the old home of a wife.

If the bonga of the old home of a wife follows her, they will get well only when he is taken back there; otherwise they are taken ill and they die. If they sacrifice every year to a bonga of the wife's old home, who has followed to the son-in-law's home, he will not eat them; if they do not sacrifice to him, they will have to give various things to make him go back. As much as they have brought from the house of the bride's father, only when they send all this back, will the bonga of the wife's old home leave them, and they will also have to take along to the home of the bride's father two animals to be sacrificed. They call the bonga of a wife's old home **acraele bonga**. If the bongas of the wife's old home become angry, they eat awfully; therefore people make sacrifices to them from fear; or they send them quickly back. 755 776

j. About exorcising bongas.

When bongas are exorcised, a good many requisites in connexion therewith have to be given, otherwise they do not go out. They exorcise the wealth-bongas. The wealth-bongas make them who have taken them in, very wealthy; but if they become obstinately angry, they eat people in large numbers. Therefore people are saved only when they exorcise them; otherwise they will eradicate the whole family.

If they get proofs through ojhas or witchfinders, that the wealth-bongas are eating, they procure the requisites: one silk cloth, one small box with sindur, a hair-knot tassel, a plait of cow-tail hair, a hair-pin, a small box with eye-paint, a winnowing-fan, a small

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755 776 flat basket, an iron stick, five chains, five nails, a pair of sandals, a wooden slab to sit on, a small cart, a bundle with grains of all crops, five rupees, two cows, one pig, one goat, a ram and five fowls. On the ram they put a small bell. When they have gathered all this, they bring the ojha.

The ojha then calls on the bongs to come. He makes the bongs take possession of a man. The ojha puts a worn-out winnowing-fan in front of the person to be possessed; in this winnowing-fan he puts about one handful of sun-dried rice; then he says: Come here, Lord, come to such and such a house, thou so and so bonga, I am calling on thee, crying to thee, in hurry and haste come running, come quickly, as a disciple, as a medium he is sitting, he is seated (the one to be possessed). Now the man quickly becomes possessed. Then they ask him: Please then, Lord, thy owner has come to an end worshipping thee, adoring thee; listen, he will not keep thee any more; what do you say? Then the bonga quickly mutters that it is right; and he says: If he will not keep me, I shall go; let him deliver up to me all that is mine.

Thereupon they bring out to him all the collected requisites. They say to him: Look, here is all that is yours; well then, are you satisfied or not? He says: Satisfied. Now he enters the cowshed to select cows for himself. He slaps two and comes away. He comes out, and they ask him: How is it, have you got everything? He says to them: Yes, I have. Thereupon they open the gate, and the two cows that he has chosen, come out of their own accord. They bind them with ropes. Thereupon they take all the collected requisites and say to him: Come along, where you have your place and abode, guide us there. Then he comes to.

Now the two cows of their own accord go in front, and these two guide the people along. The winnowing-fan the ojha takes along, carrying it in his armpit. Where the two cows stop and lie down, there they behead the sacrificial animals. Through the head of the ram they put a chain, and they hammer this fast to a tree. The flesh of the sacrificed animals they all of them cook into a hash with rice, and they all eat it there, before they go away. And the things they leave there; none will touch these; if they touch them, the wealth-bongs will follow after these. And the man from whom the bongs was exorcised, will, before a year is passed, become utterly poor; his cows and buffaloes will also all die; his paddy and rice will also be blown away, who knows where; the inhabitants of this house become utter paupers. This is what we have seen with our eyes. Unrighteous wealth will not stay.

k. Spiriting away by bongas.

776 We are very much afraid of bongas spiriting away; they spirit away people, and things also they cause to disappear. The bongas, who spirit away, are female bongas. They spirit away young Santal men. Some live in water, and some in mountain caves. It is told they

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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household, and thereafter, at the junction of two roads. Human blood can only be offered at the latter place.

Amongst lesser Boŋgas under this head, mention should be made of Acraeli Boŋga (or Jodhe Boŋga as in Mayurbhanj), who presides over the interests of married women. We were told that if a woman steals anything from her parents' home, and takes it to her husband's place, this godling maintains a close watch over the stolen properties and punishes the household by bringing illness and even death. The tenacity of this deity is almost leech-like, and to make him return to his own domain involves costly offerings.

The *Bagbut Boŋga* or tiger spirit is worshipped during the annual winter Harvest Home at Mayurbhanj, in order that tigers may not kill the cattle of the Santals. During the hypnotic trance (*Jhupar*) that precedes the sacrifice to the deity, the person possessed does not cut off the head of the fowl with a knife, but springs tiger-like on the fowl and tears it off with his teeth.

Some Boŋgas of this description take the form of young men and women for the purpose of meeting with Santals of the opposite sex. The result of such unions invariably lead to illness; and the attentions of the Boŋga-lovers can be prevented by elaborate magic and charms by Witch Doctors.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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731 782 787 [793] that special offerings would be offered when rain falls. And when rains come on, the village-priest propitiates the boundary-deities with the promised rituals and sacrifices.

To Remove Village Illness

[776] When epidemics break out in the tribe, the village deities *Gram pat*, *Bisam Thakurani* (Hindu goddess, *Kali*), together with all the gods of the Holy Grove are invoked by the priest at the head of the tribe. The preliminary procedure of the worship is the same as noted above in connection with removal of droughts with the addition that the witches responsible for the calamity may be mentioned by the men in trance supposed to speak for the deity.

755 782 787 [776] When any member of a Santal household falls ill, the head of the house arranges for an invocation to the *Orak' Boŋga* (household deity). As a preliminary to the worship of the deity, some men fall in a hypnotic stupor, in which they are supposed to have oracular powers. Thereupon, the householder

755 782 787 539 asks the man in trance:—

Dè tabe gosane òkòe boŋga, òkòe buru, heken seteren, jaotya janama lie odong, tabe gosane pataganda sira ganda bil akan ate akan gosane.

Translation:—

"O thou deity! What god art thou? What

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Hill-Spirit hast thou come here?, To what order (of spirits) dost thou belong?. Answer questions. Then, O deity! we shall spread a wooden-seat (or stone-seat) for thee." 755 782 787 539

The men in trance reply:—"Hinsaha (very well I am answering)."

Next follows an answer giving the name of the *Orak' Bonga*. The householder then prays, "So and so is ill ; he is being treated by so and so. Do please help the doctor to cure the disease. If the patient recovers, I shall offer you this (fowls, rams or goats)".

The men in trance now give appropriate answers, as to what god to propitiate, with what offerings and when, or may suggest other ways and means to get rid of the calamity. 755 782 787

This prayer is offered at the door of the room (Bhitar duar), which is considered holy as the abode of the household deity. This room is not open to strangers, and even members of the house can enter this only after a ceremonial purification. If the disease is serious, villagers are called, and *Jhupar* takes place to find out the appropriate remedy. [778] [783]

Belief in Evil Eye

Like the other aboriginal tribes of the Central Belt, the Santals believe in women possessing a malevolent eye, that can bring ruin on people by 754

Sr Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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personalities of even mothers, wives, sisters and daughters; so the witch-doctor flourishes to relieve the society of its canker. The witch-doctor finds out the evil deities (*Boṅgas*) who create disturbance in the village. They trace witches among men and women. It is he only who can say if the household deity (*Oṛak' Boṅga*) or *Jahèr era* (a female deity of the Holy Grove) is angry with anybody and needs propitiation.

In course of our enquiries in Mayurbhanj rural areas, Mr. Ananta Mañjhi, a Sub-Inspector of Police of Kaptipada described to us in detail the *modus operandi* of witch-doctors.

He said that whenever a man comes to a witch-doctor to complain of some disturbance in his household, the *Ojha* at first performs some worship by keeping a water-pot, *Tursi* leaves and a piece of copper in his presence. Then he takes a cane stick, smells it together with the aforesaid articles, and throws some rice in the water-pot. Thereafter, in a trance he begins to mention the names of the father, number of children, numbers of huts and doors to locate the evil. When all these are answered in the affirmative, the evil deity who created the disturbance is named; and the offerings suitable for its propitiation are mentioned. And if it be that a witch is responsible for the trouble, the person under whose cover she

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755 756 [754] passes in the society is mentioned. To discover witches and *Boñgas* some witch-doctors use *sal*-leaves moistened with oil and vermilion, some ring a bell, while others merely blow a conch-shell. He also gave us an account of an *Ojha* he had seen, who could, without performing any ritual, exactly say everything in detail by sitting glum after a period of moody meditation. After this, he would give elaborate instructions as to how to remove the evil spirit.

754 [115] "Witches flit about with a light like the willo' the wisp," said Mr. Sundar Mohan Mañjhi, a college student of Bamanghati, Mayurbhanj. He said, "On a new moon night my brother went to a tank alone with a torch-light with him. There he met a co-villager, and to their surprise, both of them noticed one or two lights moving away. Soon after all was dark, the lights had vanished. They tried to focus the torch-light on the place where the light was last seen. But to their horror the lights appeared again and began to run towards them. On the previous day my brother had got an itching sensation on his finger. But after the aforesaid incident, a boil appeared giving unusually excruciating pain, and his palm began to swell. The pain was incessant: all sorts of medical aid were tried but to no effect. Then, after a day he disclosed the matter and the connected incident to the people.

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Next an *Ojha* (a weaver by caste) was called in and consulted at his home, the patient giving no hints of the previous history. To their surprise, the *Ojha* himself detailed the incident, diagnosing the disease to be due to the evil eye of a witch. Naturally, the *Ojha* was requested to remove the same. The *Ojha* was supplied with vermilion, sun-dried rice, some grass (*Kaṭhòm carèc'*. A common grass, Rottboellia perforata, *Roxb.*) and two chickens. Then with some charcoal and brick powder he drew some figures on the floor and began to chant incantations to deities with appropriate offerings. Next, he took the materials to a distant place and made similar figures there also. He invited his gods and goddesses, offered them vermilion, rice, a piece of copper and a wick soaked in *ghee*. He then began to run hither and thither after marking himself with vermilion on his forehead, arms, breast and thighs. He ran thorns on some parts of his body, and offered a few drops of blood to his deity. It was found that after the removal of the witch responsible by the witch-doctor, the patient felt relieved, and from the following day the swelling subsided. Then, after a very simple treatment, the boil was healed.

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Questioned about *Ojhas*, Fagu Mañjhi, Desh pródhan of Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj, said: "People go to *Jan-ojhas* if there is any disease in the family either contagious or of a serious nature.

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755 either contagious or of a serious nature. The patient generally consults him about the disease with a sample of urine to be examined by the *Ojha*. The *Ojha* drops some oil in the sample, scrutinises it and gives the necessary medicine. If no results follow, some harm done by unseen powers is suspected. The man will then take some oil from his home, go to the *Ojha* and tell him about his troubles, the *Ojha* will utter *mantras* on the oil. Then he will take a *sal*-leaf, pour oil on it drop by drop and then close it. Next, he will open the cover and examine it, and give his verdict if there is any evil eye that is responsible, or whether the household deity is angry, and suggest remedies appropriate to the occasion. If a ghost or witch is responsible, he may suggest ways and means about the removal of the same." Continuing he said: "Suppose the patient is sleeping on a bed. The *Ojha* will come and bring a broken brick and powdered sun-dried rice together with some burnt charcoal. With these, he will draw a picture on the ground near to the bed. A quantity of powdered sun-dried rice is meant for fowls to be eaten. Fowls numbering not more than three are required. He makes the fowls take rice and the *Ojha* will keep the powdered rice on his palm, chest and his legs. Next, he makes the fowls take all these powdered rice right from his breast too. The

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Ojha will take the fowl through his legs with a swinging movement of his body thrice round the bed of the patient. After this, he will require a wick with oil and on it he pours some incense and as he goes round the patient, he does the same. Next, the *Ojha* takes the fowls and offers them to the god of the disease and to the presiding deity of the *Ojha* himself. All these he will do outside the village. Next, after taking the sacrificed fowls, the *Ojha* will go home."

Thus the *Ojha* (Witch-doctor) is a person who has the power of *mantras* to waste away the evil-influences applied to men or women by *Dàns* or *Nañjòms*. To be perfect in his craft, he has sometimes to be in league with the witches. There is another class of men called "Sakha" in Mayurbhanj, who serve as sorcerers. They can test fortune by lots and can indicate who is a witch and has brought illness in a person or animal.

The orthodox witch-finder is called "Jan-Guru". There are two methods of training in the art. The first method requires the pupil eager for such a training, to place himself under a "Jan-Guru" as a *chela* (pupil). Then the *Guru* tells him the names of the *Boñgas*, the process of worship and how to exercise the power of a "Jan-Guru." The pupil practises the lessons for some days, and when the *Boñgas* are pleased, he becomes successful

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791 and is then called a "Jan-Guru". As regards
776 the second method, it is stated that there are several
[787] *Guru Boṅgas*. The man who is devoted to them and has faith on them sees them coming to him in dreams. He then knows that the *Boṅgas* are pleased
[782] with him and want his worship. If the pupil likes it, he offers vermilion and *dhup* (incense) in the names of the *Boṅgas*, he saw in his dream. The *Boṅgas* again appear before him in dreams and tell him of their powers and ask him to worship them. With the series of *Boṅgas* thus appearing before him, the pupil becomes *Koṅka* (puzzled). He then goes to the *Boṅgathans* (the places where the *Boṅgas* live) and remains there for some days. He talks with the spirits and they assure him that whenever he remembers them, they will be at his beck and call and tell him whatever he wants to know. Thus getting his boon, the pupil returns home and continues to worship the *Boṅgas* and practise his power.

Conclusion

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755 Magic and witch-craft are an essential part of
789 the belief of most of the Hinduised tribes and the
[791] pre-Dravidian people resident in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Although it cannot be vouched for a
[777] certainty as to whether the Santals borrowed it
[794] wholesale from the Hindus, there is some internal

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evidence showing the influence of Hindu ideas on Santal magical practices. In the race of life, the Santal finds inexplicable super-normal phenomena. He does not know how to react to the unknown and unknowable; so he has recourse to magic to deal with the impersonal forces and energies through appropriate rites and spells. This is done not by all the Santals, but only by the *Ojha*, a specialist in the art of magic and witch-craft. And he is generally the common doctor for all the Hinduised tribes and the Muṇḍà people. What the witch-doctor does is to practise the art of dissociating himself with the aim of spirit-communication, when he chants some magic formulae and makes the patent gestures while he performs the time-honoured rites to conjure the spirits. All these he does with the aid of some spirits, and although his mission is like the priest of religion to attain curative results that endure to the benefit of Santals individually or the tribe taken as a whole, it cannot be said that anti-social results do not follow due to the activities of some malignant *Ojhas* out to wreak personal vengeance on their enemies with the aid of malevolent spirits.

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854/855 When a child is attacked with any disease, the parents become restless and call in the Raranic (Herbal doctor) or the Ojha (Shaman) for curing him.

593/123 **Illustration**: In the course of my tour in the Santal Parganas, in Godda Damin in the village Sundarpahari, a man one day requested me to see his son who was suffering from some disease. I went there and saw that the mother of the child held him on her lap. The [763] child at that time was pale and anaemic, and the very sight showed that he was in a dying state. In the evening of that very day I heard the child was dead. I at once went there and saw a very pitiable sight. The mother held the dead body fast in her lap and would [533] not part with it, cried loudly and gave vent to her feelings in the following lamentation song[1]:

[539] "Jare jare dullarya tingdo, ardo okate tahenkan tinyia
Indig men keda lengegimenai tingia
Haire haire dhon tingdo akarbo
Tine dine jom leda
Jara jare dullarya tingdo okakoreye suroh baraikan tingia.
Indigo menkidaing jahan beret ketingya".

(English Translation)

"Oh me! oh me! my beloved one
Where art thou now, my darling.
I said to myself all is well with me
Alas, alas, my treasure, how short a time thou wast with us.
Oh, my beloved, oh, my beloved, where hast thou found a place?
I said to myself he will get well again
Ah me! ah me!"

1. E.G.Man—Sonthalia and the Sonthals, London 1867.

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knowledge of herbs as well as the mysterious processes of evil caused by malevolent natural or human agencies and profess to cure the Santal of his daily ailments and afflictions. Thus magic ritualism is the speciality of Santal society and centre of the individual's life, whereas the religious ceremonials are more or less communal group affairs. The complicated cross section of the Santal belief would be well studied in the functional differentiation of the communal priest, the Ato naeke, his assistant, Kudam naeke, and Dehri (hunt-priest), the herbalist medicine-man, the Bonga-doctor or Ojha and the witch-detector on Jan-guru.

Different types of religious functionaires, medicine-man, etc.

Amongst the Santals working in the Daminiko area where they are closely concentrated, it was curious to notice many functionaries named as Ojha, Janguru, Kamruguru, Raranic, Ato-Naike, Kudam Naike and Dehri. The Santal carefully draws a distinction between the officers of his social ceremonials, the high priests of the community and the specialists who may be described in modern terms as the practising physicians and the mental disease experts, the last of course not being psychopathists but masters of spiritualist seances. The sorcerer who practises evil eye and witchcraft is also sharply distinguished.

Studying the other allied tribes nearby we find mostly a distinction between the social functionary in charge of religious festivals sharply distinguished from the spirit-doctor generally possessing second sight. The term for the priest is Naya amongst the Birhors and Pahan amongst the Mundas and Oraons. The word Naya as also Naike may have some connection with the

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ghost or demon. Dr. Clements has drawn rightly a distinction between a spirit intrusion and spirit possession.[1] Amongst the Santals the most respected person would be the Ojha who would work for good, being 'possessed' by a spirit. Whereas all the evils and sorceries are due in their belief to the intrusion of the bongas, often worked to that effect by that most hated and feared human set, the dains or witches. It is further curious to observe how the concepts of sorcery, breach of taboo, and bonga-intrusion have become closely interwoven with each other in Santal thought. The spirit or bonga-intrusion is generally aided by the human agency of the sorceress—but the witch of the intruding malevolent bonga would be powerless to offend unless the victim had committed some breach of taboo. The witch-doctor who is called in aid of the diseased, first of all enquiries[2] carefully about the conduct of the patient so as to find out the nature of the breach of the taboo which has enabled the evil bonga to intrude and then with the help of expiatory rites and superior spirit-aid he drives away the intruding evil bonga.

Spirit intrusion, according to Dr. Clements, is probably considerably later than disease-object intrusion and had undergone considerable diffusion before the full Neolithic period of Western Asia. Clements has further shown that belief in disease causing sorcery is distributed to the ends of the earth. It is of almost universal occurrence in the Old World and extends from the north to the south even in the New World. The basic idea has been suggested to be possibly due to the "Elementargedanken" of Bastian.

[1] Dr. Clements, op. cit., pp. 216-225.

2 [Erratum: this should read "enquires." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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756 work. The *ojha* also professes to know how to find out and deal with the possible supernatural powers at work.

• 755 The *ojha* first feels the pulse,[1] sees the tongue of the
756 patient and after having diagnosed the case he tries to drive away the complaint by uttering magical formulas or singing *jharui* songs over the patient. These mantras and *jharuis* differ in every disease.[2] After uttering the mantras the ojha blows over the patient commencing at the head and finishing downwards and towards the back. When the *mantras*[3] or *jharuis* or both have no effect, as they naturally never have in cases of disease, the next thing the *ojha* will do is to call for Sal leaves and a little mustard oil (which the Santals call Sunumbonga, lit. oil offering). With these he verifies the correctness of his diagnosis arrived at by feeling the pulse and seeing the tongue, etc. Having done this he then gives necessary instructions as regards food and treatment and himself brings or orders the ingredients wanted for
756 the medicine to be given. The *ojha* is very particular
757 not to divulge the secrets of his profession. Once in the Sundar Pahar village within Godda Damin in Santal Parganas a little boy was ill. The *ojha* of that village was called by the father of that boy to see and give him necessary medicine. He brought the root of a tree from the jungle and gave the boy the juice of that root as a cure. I asked the *ojha* the name of

[1]According to their idea if the pulse comes towards the thumb or index-finger it is a sign that orak bongas (house bongas) are hungry. If the pulse comes towards the middle finger the abge bongas (tutelary bongas) are hungry, if towards the ring or little finger a bonga of the field or outskirts is at work.

[2]Rev. P. O. Bodding, op. cit., pp. 1-32.

3 [Erratum: this should read "Mantras." Cf.
^ errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]

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I asked the ojha the name of the tree but he never divulged the name of the ingredients of his medicines to me inspite of my repeated request. If the patient is not cured they call in some other more competent *ojha* from another distant village. Sometimes the *ojha* takes other means to detect the disease and the name of the *bonga* who is making the mischief. This the *ojha* does by means of a twig of Sirom broom and drawing certain squares on the earth. (This is called "Turik" by the Santal).

The *ojha* adopts the following methods to cure the disease of the patient :

(1) *Adica Chawla* and Bul mayam.

(2) Disease localised at one point of the body and the evil cured by biting and sucking, i.e., by sucking out the intruding disease object.

(3) *Bongas* removed by digging.

(4) *Bongas* exorcised.

(5) Medicine administered.

How a Santal becomes an *ojha* : The method of initiation :

Among the Santals two kinds of *ojhas* can be seen : those who learn for pleasure's sake and those who learn seriously and earnestly. In the case of the first no initiations are required after the learning is over, whereas in the second, initiation is the essential part of the learning. To become an *ojha* (both professional and amateur) one has to be a disciple under an expert *ojha*. The first course commences in the middle of Jaishtha (May and June), their first sitting being on a Sunday or in some cases on a Friday. Every day they come to the house of the guru after taking their meals. They take their seat in the courtyard of the guru's house. In the

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for his final touch. The *ojha* agrees if he thinks that he may be able to work independently. The *ojha* then demands the following things for the function : A new loin cloth, a goat, a pair of pigeons and some fowls and one to five rupees. 756

When the disciple makes these things ready the *ojha* with his wife goes to the house of the disciple and gives the *sid* there. The *guru* and *chela* first go and bathe. Coming back they clean some place in the courtyard with cowdung and the *ojha* here puts down a few small handfuls of *adwa* rice and makes some vermilion marks at each small heap of *adwa* rice (the number of heaps vary according to the number of sacrifices to be made). The loin cloth is then spread in the courtyard, the *ojha* takes his seat on it and performs the sacrifices ; the *chela* holds the goats, the fowls and the pigeons whilst the *guru* beheads them. In one of the corners of the loin cloth the money to be given to the *guru* is tied up and when the sacrifices are performed he takes the cloth and money. [782]

Sunum bonga or divination by oil and leaves: By this means the Santal *ojha* finds out the final cause or origin of disease and death. The *ojha* demands the following things from the person who engages the *ojha* : 755 • [824]

(1) Sal tree leaves (Shorea robusta, Gärtu).

(2) Mustard oil.

(3) A little water.

The *ojha* then squats down and jerks his head a couple of times and then he dips the index-finger of the right hand in the mustard oil and sprinkles a few drops towards the sun and then he draws a mark of oil with

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755 the same finger on the earth. The *ojha* then takes a sal leaf and looks intensely over it and then takes another look over it in the similar way. A sal leaf has a number of veins which divide the surface into several compartments. In different places on the surface of a leaf the *ojha* drops oil with the index or middle finger of the right hand uttering at the same time what each oil mark is to stand for, viz., the supposed possible cause or origin of the patient's disease. The Santals believe that one of the following causes brings disease, death and misery:

(1) Natural causes,
(2) Human beings,
(3) *Bongas*, and
(4) The spirits of ancestors.

The *ojha* in the above way puts marks here and there on the leaf, at the same time muttering to himself that this is for such and that for such, and a third for something else, and so on, whereupon he commences to rub each mark in with his finger. Whilst rubbing, the *ojha* mutters some *Mantras*. The Santal *ojha* uses different names for oils and leaves in the *Mantra*; if the particular kind used is not mentioned in the *Mantra* the magic would be spoilt.

"Tarik" or Detection of Disease by Sirom Broom: The Santal *Ojha* draws a number of squares side by side on the earth with a twig or handle of a Sirom broom. At first three long lines are drawn parallel to one another on the ground and then a number of short lines are drawn across the above three lines, thus getting a figure with the help of a number of squares. The *ojha* then

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fixes the twig in each square in the ground.[1] He then takes out the twig from the figures and touches it with his forehead and destroys the figures drawn. He repeats the operation a couple of times. When saluting the twig, a disease is mentioned; if the hand trembles, it is the disease just then named. 755

By means of the above operation the *ojha* also finds out the *bonga* who has done this mischief.

The *ojha* with the handle end of a broom of Sirom (Andropogon Muricatus Retz., Straw) draws a cicrle on the earth by sitting on his haunches facing the East. In the centre of the circle the *ojha* puts the handle end of the broom down and then he salutes the broom by taking it out from the circle. Uttering the name of a *bonga*, he again puts the handle end of the broom in the centre of the circle and salutes it by raising it and at the same time utters the name of another *bonga*. In this way he repeats the operation several times until his hand holding the broom commences to tremble (not intentionally). Then he knows it is the *bonga* just named who is making the mischief.

Adwa chawla and bul mayam: By this the *ojha* propitiates the spirits of the outskirts of the village. The *ojha* calls for some *adwa chawla* (rice husked without having been boiled previously) and a little vermilion which he packs in a leaf of sal tree and instructs the patient to touch this with his left hand. The *ojha* with the "Kurta" (Head man) of the house comes out of the house. Here the *ojha* pricks his body with a thorn 756 782

[1] If he used a broom he keeps this in a vertical position, handle down, for a little while.

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of jujube tree. The blood that comes out is smeared on the rice; the *ojha* then scatters this rice on the ground as an offering to the *bongas* and at the same time invokes the *bongas*. Blood is given to satisfy a malevolent spirit. Seeing or tasting blood the *bongas* are very pleased and are quickly ready to listen. This offering of blood is called administering *bul mayam*; '*bul*' means to be drunk and '*mayam*' means blood.

The *ojha* then washes the parts where he has pricked himself and sprinkles a little water on his head.

After the *bul mayam* performance the *ojha* may take some other precautions. He calls for a *Rombro sim* (a thieving fowl). They bring him a *lisa sim* (a fowl with feathers reversed, its colour must be other than white). The *ojha* gets some charcoal and burnt clay (from the inside of a fireplace); he then grinds these two separately and puts temporarily aside wrapped up in two leaves. The *ojha* has brought with him a leaf of sal tree on which he has performed *Sunum bonga*. This he performs near the patient. He first draws a circle on the floor with a small bit of wood the diameter of which is about 12 inches. Inside this circle he makes a number of marks resembling those on the leaf; he then spits on the drawing within the circle and puts his left heel heavily down on it and finally with the left heel rubs out the marks he has drawn. He performs this operation several times. During this time the *ojha* remains silent. The object is to undo the deception of a possible witch. After this, he puts a leaf-plate on the ground, draws a circle on it and puts some burnt clay from the fireplace and

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then makes cross marks with powdered charcoal. He destroys the figures by dropping powdered rice over them. He repeats the process two or three times and then puts his heel down in the centre of the figure on the left-plate, and ultimately bites the plate with his teeth and in this way turns it over. Next, the above-mentioned fowl is given into the hand of the *ojha*, and he applies vermilion (sindur) on its head after having washed it with water. The patient is then brought before the *ojha* and sits down in front of him. The *ojha* asks the patient to touch the fowl and makes the fowl feed on the rice kept on the leaf-plate.

Next the *ojha* performs a very important act with the patient which is known as *bulan*. He takes the fowl and moves it thrice round the patient making a circle alternately from right to left and thrice alternately the opposite way, passing the fowl on its way between his legs from behind and forwards; the fowl is first taken in the right hand round the patient, passed between the *ojha's* legs from behind underneath the right thigh; here the *ojha* takes hold of the fowl with his left hand and passes the fowl round the sitting patient and beneath his left thigh when he again changes hands.

With the cowdung the *ojha* obliterates the traces of the circle he at first drew with the twig. With the little finger of his left hand, he draws a square mark on the ground, and within this square the *ojha* pinches off a little earth, mixes it with cowdung and rolls it into a ball. This ball he keeps into a cup of water, only to clean it. The *ojha* then throws some ashes into a leaf-cup with water.

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755 Then the *ojha* takes the leaf-wrapped charcoal and *atko* and whatever else he has used for making figures, etc., and wraps these things in a leaf-plate. Taking the leaf plate and the fowl in his hand the *ojha* walks out of the house of the patient without casting his look backwards. The people inside the house now take the two cups and throw the water after the *ojha* and quickly close the door. Followed by some of the village men the *ojha* goes straight to the forest or to some other place away [782] from that quarter. Here he sacrifices the fowl in the name of some *bonga* of the outskirts offering an invocation. Some kill the fowl and eat it forthwith while others sacrifice the fowl by wringing the fowl's neck. In this case, however, they do not eat it but leave it on the spot with some pieces of stone placed over it. The last procedure is the most common. The *ojha* after having done all this returns to the house of the patient where he brings down oil and vermilion. He makes some mark in the courtyard with vermilion, at the same time making a vow of offering sacrifices to some special *bonga* of his when the patient recovers.

791 **The Jan guru or the Witch-Director**: The word *Jan* is not a Santal word; it is borrowed from a Hindi word meaning 'to know', *i.e.*, he is the man who knows by revelation. People pronounced by the *Jans* to be witches are taken as witches by the Santals. Whether they really find them out or the whole thing is a hoax, the Santals believe that they find them out.

791 When in a family a man suffers from a disease, and
787 none can cure him, the patient or his relatives decide to carry the matter to a *Jan*. They always go in a crowd to the *Jan*. They are, as a matter of course, a

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tell him 'Now let us hear the oracle'. The *Jan* then takes his fee which is a rupee and tells them the name of a *bonga* or a witch who is at the bottom of their troubles.

Then they return to their village. If the *Jan* says that a *bonga* is giving the trouble then the patient will promise sacrifice. If the *Jan* declares any woman to be a witch, this woman is harassed in every possible way, fined and driven out of the village, and at times killed.

At present the *Jans* are, according to Santal belief, not like the old righteous ones. The *Jans* of ancient time got their knowledge through dreams at night or through visions in the daytime, not possessed by a divination spirit like *Jans* of the present day. Now-a-days the *Jans* keep informers who find out and tell them all particulars. *Jans* of to-day are very careful in fixing the blame. They generally fix the blame on some *bonga* or other in preference to a witch.

Classification of the supreme, superior and supernatural beings: It is very difficult to attempt a classification of the orders of the supernatural beings which constitute the religious belief of a community. The classification would often imply the existence of a notion of hierarchy of the supernatural beings, one being far superior to the rest. It is curious to observe that this supreme being is never worshipped in the faith that he can never work out any evil. As for the rest the rank may be determined in the order in which worship is offered to them. But here again the difficulty would lie in the fact that a particular occasion would demand predominance being given to particular spirits. Thus the classification would be more or less a division in parallel lines, for it

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whatever you wished would have come to pass. You could have wound a string round one of those sticks and then if you had taken the string along with you to a cock fight you would have had good fortune, and the same would apply in hunting. But if you did not behave properly towards it and make offerings to it, it could finish you off and eat you. So that is what it is all about, and now that person will stay around anywhere at all and frighten people. He has become a *bhut*.'"

One of the methods by which it is possible to steal the powers of a dead magician, or rather to capture his "soul force", was explained in the following manner. It is necessary to go to the spot where he was cremated and there draw a picture of the dead man on the ground. If one made offerings to this picture and recited the appropriate spells, he could be brought under control. Some years ago, when a well-known *ojha* in the village of Bankadaha had died, his disciples kept guard over the spot where he had been cremated for some time after his death.

When the Santal *ojha* is called in about a case of sickness or of sudden death, his first function is to try to determine the type to which the particular misfortune belongs. He consults the oracles in order to discover whether natural causes are to blame, in which case it is called plain *rug*, or sickness, or whether it is necessary to lay the responsibility on a witch, a *boinga* or a displeased ancestor. He sits down in the courtyard and waits until two *sarjom* leaves and some mustard oil in a leaf cup are brought to him. Holding one of the leaves in his left hand, he dips his right index finger in the oil and sprinkles some drops on the ground as an offering to the spirits. While doing so he asks for guidance in determining the correct cause of the illness or fatality. He then puts a drop of oil into each of the compartments of the leaf that he is holding, one drop representing one possible agency of evil. There is one for natural causes, three or four for different *boingas*, and other drops represent households in which there may be a witch, including the sick man's house, his father-in-law's house, the houses on the other side of the village street, and so on. When the drops are in position the *ojha* rubs the two leaves together and then holds the first leaf up to the light to discern the shapes that have been taken by the oil. He pronounces the cause of the disease in accordance with the pattern that he sees. If he decides that the *boingas* are displeased, he performs the ceremony known as *bil mayam* in much the same manner as the village co-priest does during the festivals. The blood which he

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755 draws from his arm, chest or thigh is mixed with some sun-dried rice until the whole is saturated. The *ojha* then proceeds to scatter the rice on the ground and prays to the spirits to spare the sick man from further interference. He confirms his diagnosis by oracle by examining the patient and in particular by feeling his pulse, and apart from his power with the spirits [752] he has a stock-in-trade that includes many remedies, spells, and also powers of exorcism. This is resorted to at once in certain cases such as snake bite. The *ojha* squats down beside the sick person and takes in his left hand a peacock feather or sometimes one or two twigs from an old broom, and these he passes along the patient's body without touching it, moving from the head to the feet and chanting the correct spells as he does so.

The magician always warns his clients that there is a possibility of error in his diagnosis, for it is the common belief that witches can interfere with the process of divination in order to draw attention away from themselves. Sometimes at an early stage, but usually when the illness persists in spite of all attempts at a cure, the suspicion of witchcraft arises, and a second divination reveals that a witch is at work. Once the 754 suspicion has been voiced the whole village is concerned in the [753] consultation, and the headman walks through the village exclaiming in a loud voice near each house: "Beware, for if the sick man does not get well we shall deal with thee!" More *ojhas* are consulted, and once agreement has been reached that witchcraft is operating, then steps have to be taken to locate the witch. The villagers are as a rule reluctant to proceed to this step and only do so when other measures have failed, for no one can tell in advance whether the witch will be found in his own house or not. At times frivolous accusations of witchcraft are made in order to pay off an old grudge, but the 754 fear of the real thing is very strong. The oil divination has to be confirmed by some other means, one of which is the ordeal 755 of placing twigs in water. Some freshly cut twigs are placed in the mud at the water's edge of a pond and vermilion is placed on them. The twigs represent the various households and spirits, as the drops of oil do in the oil and leaf method. The twig that withers first helps to fix the direction in which the villagers must look for the answer to their suspicions. Another method of divination is to place some rice wrapped in a leaf in a white-ant hill; if the ants attack the rice immediately, then witchcraft is involved.

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754 lot of nonsense. The people of the house consulted the oil oracle
754 and found that a *boŋga* had possessed him. They did their best
754 to exorcize the spirit, but the boy only became worse and began
.755 to wander about in the open. After a few days he left his home
and did not return. Again they consulted the oil oracle and
saw that he had been pounced on by a *ḍɔn boŋga*; by trying to
754 exorcize it they had only made him worse. From time to time
the herd boys used to see the youth, but when they went to
catch him he ran into the jungle. When he saw that the folk
were trying to get hold of him he went over to Gurma hill,
about seven miles from Calta, and lived there; he used to be
seen there occasionally. His parents went there to try to bring
him home; they stayed in the neighbouring village for three or
four days, but they were unable to do anything. A few days
later it came to be known that he was regularly visiting the
house of a female *jun*. He went there at night to drink water
from a brass pot that she placed for him. The boy's father
heard about it and watched the place one night. Sure enough,
the boy came and drank the water out of the pot, but when
he saw his father he ran away. There has been no news of him
from that time to this; no one knows where he has gone or
where he stays or what he eats. His father says that he had
become very thin and had long hair and long nails. They have
not found him yet." The fear of witchcraft is a fact of everyday
experience among the Santals; the possibility that evil forces
can disrupt and disturb their lives, robbing them of the fruit
of their labours and mocking at their prayers, is never far from
the surface of their minds.

754 Although they fear greatly the influence of the *ḍɔn*, they
683 take vigorous action to rid their village of her presence once
they have been convinced that a particular person is a witch.
Very often they take some steps without going to the extreme
of consulting the witchfinder. They act on the suspicions
revealed by the oil oracle and confirmed by eccentric behaviour
on the part of some individual who lives in the house that has
been indicated. The nature of the action depends on the extent
of the injury that has been inflicted, and is left at times to the
initiative of the principal victims. It is extremely difficult to
obtain authentic evidence of particular cases, but I can per-
sonally vouch for examples where women have been severely
beaten, other cases where the whole house has been fined for
"keeping" a witch, and some where all the members of a family
have been driven from the village or have themselves preferred